

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 100831Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO USDOC WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6645

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 1350

USDOC FOR CAGNE OIM/SAD

ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SY

SUBJ: INDIANA IOGA TRADE MISSION: SYRIA WRAP-UP

1. MISSION DEPARTED DAMASCUS FOR TEHRAN EARLY MONDAY MORNING, MARCH 8, AFTER ROUSING FAREWELL PERFORMANCE BY FAMED EGYPTIAN ORIENTAL DANCER RACHA AT SEMIRAMIS HOTEL CLUB.

2. MISSION RECEIVED USUAL WARM WELCOME FROM SYRIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. DEPUTY MINISTER OF PLANNING MOHAMMAD ISSAM HELOU AND DIRECTOR OF PLANNING ZOUHAIR JUWEIJATI GAVE MISSION MEMBERS A GOOD OVERALL VIEW OF SYRIAN ECONOMY AND OF LONG-RANGE HOUSING PROJECTS UNDER FOURTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1976-80). DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HOUSING HISHAM SATI OUTLINED PLANS FOR CONSTRUCTION OVER NEXT FIVE YEARS OF OVER 200,000 HOUSING UNITS (75,000 BY HIS DIRECTORATE THE REST BY OTHER

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GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PRIVATE CONTRACTORS WITH PRIVATE

SECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR JUST UNDER HALF THE TOTAL UNITS), NEED FOR TURNKEY PLANTS FOR PRODUCING PREFABRICATED HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTION OF "NEW TOWNS" FOR WHICH TOTAL DESIGN-ENGINEERING-CONSTRUCTION PACKAGES ARE SOUGHT. NEW TOWNS WILL BE FUNDED IN PART BY KUWAIT, ABU DHABI, AND WORLD BANK; SATI ALSO SEEKING FINANCING FROM U.S. SOURCES. MISSION MEMBERS IMPRESSED BY SARG PLANS AND SATI'S PRESENTATION. KUIECK, KANE, MILLER, AND FRANKLIN LATER RETURNED FOR INDIVIDUAL, PRIVATE SESSIONS WITH SATI. SATI LATER GAVE A LUNCHEON FOR MISSION; DEPUTY HOUSING MINISTER MOHAMMAD AL-AMIR ATTENDED (MINISTER ABDUL-BAQI WAS IN WASHINGTON).

3. AMBASSADOR GAVE BUFFET/RECEPTION FOR MISSION MARCH 7, WITH 65-70 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS, AND PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN ATTENDING, INCLUDING MINISTER OF EUPHRATES DAM SUBHI KAHHALEH AND MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION MOHAMMAD ALI HASHEM. COMMERCIAL BANK OF SYRIA DIRECTOR DR. DIB ABU-ASSALI RECEIVED CORNELIUS ALIG (INDIANA NATIONAL BANK) WHO DISCUSSED POSSIBILITIES OF OPENING CORRESPONDENT RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMERCIAL BANK. STATE SENATOR GUTMAN AND STATE REPRESENTATIVE HALL PAID COURTESY CALL ON MOHAMMAD ALI AL-HALABI, SPEAKER OF PEOPLE'S COUNCIL (PARLIAMENT). BALL STATE PRESIDENT PRUIS READ A PAPER BEFORE DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY RECTOR DR. MOHAMMAD AL-FADEL AND UNIVERSITY DEANS AND WAS PRESENTED WITH PLAQUE OF UNIVERSITY. AYERS (BALL BROTHERS RESEARCH CORP.) AND HALL CONFERRED WITH HISHAM AKHRASS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION DIVISION, MINISTRY OF PLANNING, ON SARG PLANS IN IRRIGATION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT. IN ADDITION TO THESE GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS, A NUMBER OF CONTACTS WERE MADE BETWEEN MISSION MEMBERS AND PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN.

4. MISSION AND EMBASSY PLEASED WITH SARG RESPONSE. AYERS DECIDED TO DELAY HIS DEPARTURE TO TEHRAN A DAY AND A HALF TO FOLLOW UP ON POSSIBLE \$2.5 MILLION SPRINKLER CONTRACT. AYERS, KANE, KUIECK, MILLER, AND FRANKLIN SAID THEY WOULD RETURN TO SYRIA, SOME OF THEM PRIOR TO MISSION'S DEPARTURE FROM MIDDLE EAST TO U.S. INDIANA MISSION APPEARED MORE UNCLASSIFIED

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SERIOUS THAN EARLIER MARYLAND GROUP (DAMASCUS 372), BETTER BRIEFED ABOUT BUSINESS POSSIBILITIES HERE, AND GENERALLY MORE PREPARED TO DO BUSINESS. SARG OFFICIALS IMPRESSED BY HIGH-QUALITY TECHNICAL QUESTIONS POSED BY GROUP. BIGGEST PROBLEM REMAINS FINANCING US EFFORTS HERE; SARG OFFICIALS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY RAISED POINT THAT US TECHNOLOGY HAD ADVANTAGE IN SERVICING SYRIAN HOUSING NEEDS IF US FIRMS COULD OFFER FINANCING COMPETITIVE WITH

EUROPEANS. OTHER COMPETITIVE DIFFICULTIES CITED IN PARA 5
DAMASCUS 372, ALSO STILL OBTAIN.
MURPHY

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